

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed August 1, 2008, which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19 remain in this application, where claims 10-19 had been added.

In the Office Action, claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,136,817 (Schroder) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,050,971 (Kaufholz). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-19 are patentable over Schroder and Kaufholz for at least the following reasons.

Schroder is directed to voice control of a device where voices of users are characterized to distinguish or identify the speech inputs of different users. This enables the device to recognize and respond only to a particular user. Schroder uses user profiles to distinguish or identify the speech inputs of different users.

Kaufholz is directed to a speech recognition apparatus having

multiple audio inputs to cancel background noise. An audio cancellation module produces a speech signal by canceling two of the independent audio source signals from a microphone signal. As recited on column 5, lines 10-17, the loudest source signal is identified, and this source signal is tracked among the various microphone input signals.

It is respectfully submitted that Schroder, Kaufholz and combination thereof, do not teach or suggest the present invention as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 9 which, amongst other patentable elements, recites (illustrative emphasis provided):

wherein the recognition of the predetermined keyword at the second position calibrates the beam forming module to follow the user from the first position to the second position so that the subsequent utterance originating from the second position are accepted while utterances of other users at other positions are discarded, the second position including an orientation and a distance relative to the microphone array, and the speech control unit being configured to discriminate between sounds originating from users who are located in front of each other; and  
wherein the subsequent utterance originating from the second position will be discarded if not preceded by the recognition of the predetermined keyword originating from the second position.

Discarding utterances of other users at other positions, discriminating between sounds originating from users who are located in front of each other, and discarding utterance if not preceded by recognition of a predetermined keyword are nowhere disclosed or suggested in Schroder and Kaufholz, alone or in combination. Rather, Schroder merely discloses to identify or distinguish user based on user profiles, and not based on any predetermined keywords or positions that include both orientation and distance relative a microphone array, while Kaufholz discloses tracking the loudest source signal.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 9 are allowable over Schroder and Kaufholz, and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Claims 2-8 and 10-19 respectively depend from one of claims 1 and 9 and accordingly are allowable for at least this reason as well as for the separately patentable elements contained in each of said claims. Accordingly, separate consideration of each of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

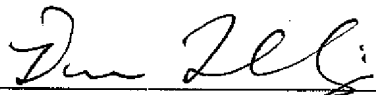
Further, as correctly noted on page 6 of the Office Action,

Schroder and Kaufholz do not disclose or suggest the features of claims 11-14 and 16-19 related to indications including an animal in various states. However, Official Notice is taken that such indications would have been known. Applicant respectfully traverses that indications including an animal in various states as recited in claims 11-14 and 16-19 would have been known requests that the Examiner provide prior art references clearly illustrating that it is well known to provide indications including an animal in the particular states recited in claims 11-14 and 16-19.

In addition, Applicant denies any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicant reserves the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded. And in particular, no Official Notices are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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October 28, 2008

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